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Input from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat hereby transmits the input from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

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Summary of the Chair of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

[Original: Spanish]

I. Introduction

1. At the thirty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), held in Mexico City from 23 to 27 May 2016, the member States adopted resolution 700(XXXVI), brokered by Mexico, establishing the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as a regional mechanism to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and its means of implementation, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

2. The first meeting of the Forum was held in Mexico City, from 26 to 28 April 2017. The meeting was chaired by Mexico, in its capacity as Chair of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC, and convened under the auspices of the Commission.

3. The meeting of the Forum was open to States, the United Nations system, regional and subregional bodies, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society.

4. The purpose of the first meeting of the Forum was for Latin American and Caribbean countries was to share experiences and best practices. It was divided into three segments: (1) the presentation of reports by ECLAC and its subsidiary bodies, (2) peer reviews moderated by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico, and (3) an analysis of the three dimensions of development, namely economic, social and environmental. In addition, two special sessions were held on artificial intelligence and means of implementation.

II. Annual report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[1]

5. The report prepared by the ECLAC secretariat as a contribution to the discussions at the first meeting of the Forum underscored that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals represented the consensus of governments and different stakeholders to work towards a transformative vision of economic, social and environmental sustainability. It was a civilizing, universal, indivisible and rights-based agenda. The report covered three areas: an analysis of the progress made thus far and the challenges ahead, a description of national institutional mechanisms existing in the region for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and an analysis of the challenges and opportunities involved in building and measuring Sustainable Development Goal indicators. The complexity of the 2030 Agenda meant that the goals had to be integrated and that the inertia of fragmentation and compartmentalization must be set aside.

[1] ECLAC, *Annual report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/L.4268(FDS.1/3), April 2017.

6. The five tensions that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could help to solve were: the recessionary bias resulting from persistent trade imbalances, the high levels of instability and uncertainty created by financial globalization, the need to close the gaps between the winners and losers of globalization, migration-related conflicts and the need for sustainable peace, and the need to protect the planet and future generations' right to development. In light of those tensions, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals had to be reaffirmed so that no one was left behind.

7. The report warned that inequality and hyperglobalization, or globalization in the hands of a few, posed one of the world's greatest challenges. It was imperative that everyone could benefit from development and that no one was left behind.

8. In sum, the ECLAC report underscored the need to restore international cooperation, going beyond trade and multilateralism to include a new and invigorated role for regional integration; to participate fully in the technology revolution; to promote an environmental big push; to eliminate poverty and strengthen equality; to mobilize financial resources with a focus on middle-income countries, small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries; to build new capacity and to broaden the participation of all actors in society. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda calls for a review of governance at the global, regional and national levels; the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans, budgets and business models; meeting the challenge of measuring and following up the Sustainable Development Goals by strengthening national statistical systems and data systems designed for this purpose and developing new indicators; the analysis of means of implementation, particularly with respect to financing, technology, fair trade and access to information; and the achievement of intersectoral and interinstitutional coordination and the participation of all stakeholders, including businesses and civil society. Hence, a new policy dialogue is needed amid the rapid transformation of the economy, policy and technology, and a period of uncertainty for the region.

III. Dialogue on the contribution of the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC and major intergovernmental meetings to the 2030 Agenda[2]

9. The Chairs of the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC participated in a panel discussion, in which it was confirmed that those bodies represented important forums in which to advance discussions on the regional vision with respect to implementing the 2030 Agenda, and that existing synergies should be further strengthened. Coordination must be achieved in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to harmonize policies and actions.

[2] The dialogue was held in two rounds. In the first round, statements were made by the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies of ECLAC, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The second round included the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Committee on South-South Cooperation, the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean.

10. The importance of the joint work carried out between these bodies was also acknowledged. The joint efforts of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and the Regional Conference on Women and the contributions made by the Working Group on Gender Statistics in the context of the Statistical Conference, as well as the incorporation of the issue of georeferencing at the Conference, were all commended.

11. The panel insisted on the need to continue promoting cooperation between the different agencies, funds and specialized programmes. The joint work carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ECLAC in the framework of the Regional Conference on Social Development and the Ministerial Forum on Development is a relevant example. South-South cooperation is an essential component of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, over 1,400 actions are under way in the region on education and health, multidimensional poverty measurement and institutional capacity-building. Moving forward, the challenge will be to improve the coordination of the regional actions of all participants in South-South cooperation.

12. The importance of developing indicators tailored to regional needs was also reiterated. The Regional Conference on Population and Development has taken great steps forward in this area, with the lines of action, targets and indicators established in the Operational guide for the implementation and follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. The Montevideo Consensus and its priority measures provide a set of precise, comparable, measurable and clearly defined indicators that are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The importance of planning is reflected in the 2030 Agenda, and various countries in the region have consequently incorporated aspects of the Agenda into their national development plans and budgets, and 20 countries have already put in place coordination mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda.

IV. United Nations Development Group-Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDG-LAC)

13. The United Nations Development Group - Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDG-LAC) presented a document at the Regional Forum entitled "Leaving no one behind in Latin America and the Caribbean: overcoming inequality to eradicate poverty". The document indicated that the 2030 Agenda demanded a redefinition of problems and challenges, as well as solutions, using a multidimensional approach that took synergies and interconnections into account. In addition, implementation tools must be coordinated within countries to avoid fragmentation between ministries, sectors and territories, and disaggregated statistical or administrative data are a key important tool. Structural changes are needed, not just in the economic sphere, but also in the social and environmental spheres, to ensure fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind.

14. Through its country teams, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supports efforts made at the national level to achieve the 2030 Agenda Goals and promotes a coordinated strategy of mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS). MAPS was formulated by UNDP to identify immediate and priority action areas, as well as possible alliances and opportunities for support, to ensure that the knowledge and experience of the United Nations system is available to the countries and to design frameworks for monitoring and measuring implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level. UNDP is working on this strategy with 31 of the 33 countries in the region.

15. From a life cycle perspective, the joint document warns that, given the lack of social security contributions and the enormous needs of the care system, the region is faced with a challenge to maintain and improve per capita income and to preserve the income security of older persons.

16. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) views work as a social lynchpin and a necessary component in the construction of inclusive, prosperous and solidarity-based societies. Many issues must be addressed in the region, including access to higher education, adolescent pregnancy and early unions.

17. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works jointly with other partners and United Nations agencies to jointly address the challenges of 2030 Agenda implementation, including — with ECLAC — identifying equity indicators for monitoring SDG 3 and — with the Organization of American States (OAS) — the mapping of joint actions for the realization of the 2030 Agenda. The Organization considers it essential to reduce health inequalities, especially among vulnerable groups such as rural and indigenous populations, and counts social security and lack of inclusion among the region's greatest challenges.

18. The World Food Programme (WFP) views food security in the region as a key component in development. Furthermore, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will require investment in social protection networks in order to build resilient societies. Women, with their fundamental role in poor and vulnerable communities, play a vital part in this process. Local communities must be empowered and more must be invested in the decentralization of social protection networks and in disaster preparedness and emergency response through these social protection networks.

19. In order to advance from an operational stage to a programmatic stage, governments must exercise leadership in reflecting implementations needs in budgets.

V. International agencies and financial institutions

20. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) views a revitalized global alliance as essential to ensure the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Official development assistance plays a strategic role in capacity-building for sustainable development, and the call for developed countries to allocate 0.7% of GDP to this assistance must not be forgotten. In this regard, CELAC will continue to engage in systematic follow-up and review processes on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The member countries of CELAC remain committed to achieving sustainable development in an integrated and balanced manner across its three dimensions, as agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by proposing shared solutions to regional and global challenges for the benefit of society. In this regard, it is vital to ensure the availability of financial resources and non-financial resources, such as capacity-building and the development, transfer and dissemination of clean technologies under favourable conditions.

VI. Civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders

21. The representatives of civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders underscored that the 2030 Agenda called for collaborative efforts to achieve shared goals, targets and indicators. The challenges of sustainable

development include economic, social and political elements that are interlinked and that require coordinated responses from all stakeholders.

22. Although governments are responsible for implementing the 2030 Agenda according to their national priorities and capacity, society also needs to play an active role. With a view to ensuring that no one is left behind, the inclusion of civil society is crucial, especially in the current context of setbacks with respect to discrimination and wealth concentration, and of growing conservatism that poses a threat to the social milestones achieved thus far, such as the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

23. The 2030 Agenda is promoting a new paradigm, placing individuals and the defence of their human rights at the centre of policies. States should encourage a new people-centred, governance-based sustainable development model. Moreover, the vital participation of civil society calls for an enabling environment and access to reliable statistics, as well as a participatory culture and accountability in policies relating to the Sustainable Development Goals.

24. The private sector's commitment to achieving these Goals is indispensable. The United Nations Global Compact is helping to mobilize this sector in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through local networks in 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries by building political momentum and capacity in businesses so that they can align their strategies with the Goals; ensuring that these companies participate in public-private forums; establishing partnerships with various entities; and promoting financial resources to fund the Goals.

VII. Peer learning on voluntary national reviews of the member countries of the Forum (institutional arrangements, national measurements and challenges and priorities)[1]

25. The three countries — the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico — that presented voluntary national reviews at the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, shared their experiences with the other countries. Meanwhile, the 11 countries that will present voluntary national reviews in 2017 reported on the progress made.

26. During the discussions, the participating countries reiterated that the 2030 Agenda was a global, long-term commitment that would require the State, not just the government, to take ownership of the framework. Policies must go beyond government terms of office and include all sectors.

27. The three main areas for ensuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals are institutional structures, planning mechanisms and the means of measurement and the development of indicators. The institutional inertia of viewing the State in a compartmentalized manner is a barrier that must be overcome, in order to develop a rationale of integration instead. National policies and plans must also be updated to align them with the Sustainable Development Goals, ensure sound planning and coordinate tasks among different institutions.

[1] The discussion was organized into three panels. The first was moderated by Mexico and comprised the focal points for national implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru. The second was moderated by Colombia and the participating countries were El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. The third panel was moderated by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, with representatives of Belize, Costa Rica and Uruguay participating.

28. The countries in the region have chosen one of two options: either to create new institutions to follow up implementation of the 2030 Agenda or to modify the mandates of existing institutions. Most of those follow-up mechanisms are headed by the President and involve a variety of ministries and stakeholders. That demonstrates that the 2030 Agenda is not the sole preserve of one sector, that requires political will and leadership at the highest level, and that its inclusive nature calls for the participation of all sectors of the State.

29. Each country has established its own planning mechanisms, on the basis of its national capacities and priorities. The Goals are aspirational, and each country may choose how to implement them. Although some have chosen to divide the 17 Goals into thematic clusters, they all recognize their integrated nature and the indivisibility of the 2030 Agenda. By nature, this development framework will evolve over time and it will be necessary to analyse how it is implemented in the region over the years.

30. As well as the institutional arrangements, some countries have adapted their national development plans to the 2030 Agenda or even designed them on that basis.

31. In relation to financing, one of the major challenges lies in channeling specific resources towards implementing the 2030 Agenda. Some of the region's countries are engaged in aligning their budgets to the Goals, given that budgetary resources are essential to achieving them. Governments must invest resources in the pursuit of the Goals. In addition, given the ambition of the 2030 Agenda and the scarcity of resources, the banking sector must be engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in order to achieve collaboration between public and private investment. Incentives must be created for the private sector to align with the public interest. It is important to optimize public resources, by improving the quality of public spending and fostering public-private partnerships.

32. The countries recognized the extreme importance of multi-stakeholder engagement for the implementation of the Agenda, especially the participation of civil society, including academia and the private sector, which tends to be absent. All the stakeholders must take ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals and create groups and networks to support their implementation. Parliaments play an essential role in approving budgets to support efforts aimed at achieving the Goals, and in ensuring accountability and reflecting the concerns of the population.

33. Given their importance, matters relating to financing and the means of implementation need to be widely discussed. For that reason, the countries commended the initiative put forward by ECLAC to hold a regional consultation on financing of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region. This would be an opportunity to discuss these issues with the banking sector and with regional and international financial agencies, and to coordinate the 2030 Agenda with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

34. The countries insisted that measurement was fundamental, since it was the only way to ascertain progress. Individuals must be able to access reliable and effective information. Efforts must be made to develop new information sources, such as tax information systems, and to improve national accounts systems. The greatest challenges refer to the disaggregation of statistical data, the strengthening of national statistical systems and the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals into budgeting and planning processes at the national, local and territorial levels.

VIII. Special session on artificial intelligence

35. This segment of the Forum's agenda clearly showed that exponential technological change was one of the greatest challenges facing the international community. Technology can make a decisive contribution to fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals, but poses risks as well. Harmless in itself, technology has effects that depend on the use it is put to and the decisions taken.

36. It is calculated that 75 million jobs could be replaced by robots and new processes linked to artificial intelligence over the next 10 to 15 years. This may raise productivity while at the same time having pernicious effects on the production structure, as well as social consequences. Employment is one of the indispensable conditions for reducing world poverty. Technology, not migration, has been the greatest factor behind job losses in developed countries.

37. Digital technologies are not only exponential in themselves, but interact within a digital ecosystem and combine with others to create new ones. Accordingly, it is vital to know which of them are driving the deepest changes: quantum computing, so powerful that it can defeat all today's asymmetric encryption systems; the Internet of things, connecting everyone on all devices; digital cloud interconnectivity, making information and connections available to everyone everywhere; robotics for service provision; big data for smart information management; self-driving vehicles, making more efficient and personal transportation available to persons with disabilities; and artificial intelligence, replacing human processes with robots. To predict the effect of exponential technologies, we need to set out from a clear diagnosis and invest more and better in areas of opportunity rather than being left chasing behind an unstoppable process.

38. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean were not part of the industrial revolution or the knowledge economy. Now, however, they need to join the digital revolution. For this, public policies need to provide for sustained investment in research and development, which now totals less than 1% of GDP in the region (by comparison, the Republic of Korea spends 4.3% of GDP); the training of a new generation of scientists and technologists to make this change; and true broadband to facilitate connectivity. Besides public investment, public-private partnerships are essential if the targets envisaged are to be met. Profound changes and long-term commitment are needed.

39. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean need to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the fourth industrial revolution and the 2030 Agenda to design public policies that can enhance people's quality of life through the application of exponential technologies and innovations, on which sustainable development for all depends so much. The region's countries can benefit from the development and use of big data to formulate more effective and comprehensive public policies that meet the needs of the population with long-term results. We need to make big data an instrument of the fourth industrial revolution, which can also become a social revolution.

40. Exponential technologies could become an essential tool for making good educational and staffing shortcomings in the area of research and development. There is a need for structural changes to enhance capacity-building and for knowledge to be imparted with a view to producing more globally competitive human resources and highly skilled migration. It is indispensable for solid infrastructure frameworks to be built to make these tools universally accessible.

41. Another imperative need is to ensure the subject is discussed and followed up at the highest level, since cooperation will be essential to prevent and forestall the

possible negative effects of these technologies and see to it that they are employed to fulfil the 2030 Agenda. At the end of the special session, it was agreed that a working group of the region's countries would be set up to reflect and decide on lines of action for exponential technologies and develop road maps. This working group could help in identifying and reaching an understanding of the great risks and opportunities entailed by technological change.

IX. Dialogues on eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world in the framework of sustainable development*

42. Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development is central to achieving the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development. There are four challenges to this integration: the conceptual challenge, overcoming the region's established practice of working by sector; the technical challenge, identifying the priorities that define the three dimensions and their points of interaction; the institutional challenge, addressing the fragmented nature and inertia of the institutions that should be focused on sustainable development; and the challenge of evaluating the level of integration between economic, social and environmental policies. To this end, efforts should be made at the national and regional levels and in the framework of the United Nations to prepare for discussions on progress in this area at the next meeting of the Forum.

The economic dimension

43. Economic growth remains slow in Latin America and the Caribbean, largely as a result of the ineffectiveness of the traditional growth model followed by the region, based on exports of commodities and manufactures and attracting foreign direct investment. Global geopolitical conditions are currently highly complex and present new challenges. A new growth strategy is needed in which the domestic market plays a central role throughout the business cycle, together with a renewed focus on investment policies and better management of the investment cycle. Latin America needs a more developmental macroeconomy in order to meet the commitments of the 2030 Agenda.

44. Poverty cannot be combated unless inequality is addressed. Growth must be made inclusive. Because it is people-centred, the 2030 Agenda requires that a country's economic growth should also improve the quality of life of its citizens. The 2030 Agenda is universal and is not aimed solely at developing countries.

45. In order to mobilize resources for sustainable development, developing countries will have to exercise political will and the architecture of international financial institutions will have to be redesigned. Furthermore, Latin America and the Caribbean must integrate further in order to counteract protectionist trends, which are causing great uncertainty in the countries. Accordingly, in addition to adopting a national approach to the 2030 Agenda, regional integration should be vigorously pursued.

46. Poverty has been reduced in the region; however, the picture changes when non-income factors are taken into account. All countries must generate indicators that measure poverty in all its dimensions.

* The dimensions addressed Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14 in three round tables developed to the three dimensions of sustainable development: round table 1: the economic dimension; round table 2: the social dimension; and round table 3: the environmental dimension.

47. Growth is necessary, but not sufficient on its own: a structural change is needed. Faced with an economic recession, productivity must be improved, social spending increased and informal employment reduced. The State must also implement redistributive policies and strengthen social security systems. Public-private partnerships will be key to infrastructure investment.

The social dimension

48. At least 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals are linked to the social dimension. Social issues overlap, so social development is an investment with positive returns for economic growth and environmental protection.

49. A major achievement is that, in recent years, the idea of social welfare has spread throughout the region. Latin America and the Caribbean have moved away from clientelist policies towards a more social-rights-based approach. Social protection is important but not enough on its own; occupational training and job creation programmes must also be expanded. We must change the development model and change current production models to promote decent work, protect workers and train them in new technologies.

50. State action must be made stronger, in the sense of rethinking the State-market-society equation and looking for a model centred on rights and people. Regulatory frameworks for trade, finance and taxes must be in place and a fairer distribution of income ensured.

51. To enact social welfare, structural inequalities must be addressed, including socioeconomic, gender-based, ethnic, racial and territorial inequalities and those related to the human life cycle. Social goals must be aligned and made consistent with economic goals, as inequality is incompatible with growth. The 2030 Agenda seeks, above all, to leave no one behind. This will not be possible without social inclusion.

The environmental dimension

52. Development policies must take into account the environmental dimension. Production must rise to boost economic growth, but measures in that direction must take into account social welfare and environmental protection. All 17 Sustainable Development Goals include aspects of the environmental agenda and 86 targets relate directly to environmental issues.

53. Climate change has led to extreme weather events, loss of biodiversity and an increase in the number of endangered species. Moreover, as a highly urbanized region, Latin America produces a great deal of waste, more than 10% of the world total, owing, among other factors, to a lack of recycling. Policymaking requires four changes: (i) develop integrated programmes; (ii) break the link between production and pollution (decoupling); (iii) move towards low carbon economies (decarbonization); and (iv) detoxify the air, soil and water.

54. Disasters hit the most vulnerable populations the hardest. The effects of climate change, such as food insecurity, cascade down. Issues related to development, disaster risk and the environment must be linked, particularly in island countries. The most recent international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, are a step towards integrating these concepts. Statistics show that unsustainable development, human and social behaviour and climate change combine to increase risks. The Sustainable Development Goal indicators must be integrated with those of the Sendai Framework in order to obtain information to adopt measures that are fit for purpose.

X. Special session on the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

55. Given its scope, achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires considerable financial and non-financial resources, which are scarce. International cooperation, the mobilization of resources and upgrading of tax systems are therefore crucial.

56. Partnerships with the private sector are also essential. The greatest challenge facing public policy is to reconcile the interests of the private sector with those of the public sector. The region also faces significant challenges with regard to resource mobilization, largely as a result of low levels of taxation.

57. International trade could be a driver of development, but resources must be distributed equitably. Foreign direct investment encourages growth, but growth alone is not enough. The fundamental issue is how to transform global liquidity into savings and use those savings to finance public works and development projects.

58. Since not all financing goes to development, governments must develop public policies to steer financing towards this aim.

59. A comprehensive analysis must be undertaken of United Nations agencies' capacities in order to define the role that each agency should play in support of the 2030 Agenda. How United Nations agencies will finance the pillars of development and by how much must also be assessed, as currently only 5%-6% of the Organization's budget is earmarked for the development pillar. The United Nations does not pursue goals on its own initiative — rather, the States do so, but it is the responsibility of the United Nations to have the necessary resources and competencies to support countries' efforts.

60. Sustainable peace has been proposed as a transformative component of conflict prevention. The concept has accordingly been put forward as an important element in the agenda of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

XI. Conclusions on the regional challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda

61. The international context in which Latin America and the Caribbean is undertaking to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is marked by trade imbalances, rising poverty and environmental degradation caused by hyperglobalization. This is compounded by the weakening of multilateralism and of international solidarity amid the resurgence of unilateralist worldviews, protectionist trends and xenophobic political forces. In our countries, inequality conspires against economic growth.

62. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals offer a way to correct those imbalances, asymmetries and polarization, and to achieve inclusive and sustainable development that "leaves no one behind" and protects the environment.

63. In addition to the adverse international conditions, the challenges facing the region in terms of developing the global development framework are: (1) overcoming policy fragmentation; (2) achieving timely, accurate and open information and indicators; (3) dealing with the implications of exponential technological change; (4) directing financial and non-financial resources to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; and (5) ending inequality.

64. Regional cooperation is the ideal way to achieve the Goals adopted two years ago by the United Nations General Assembly. Latin America and the Caribbean is setting an example to other regions, by matching the commitments undertaken in September 2015 with actions.

65. Every country has different approaches, visions of the future, models and instruments for achieving sustainable development, depending on its circumstances and national priorities. The representatives reaffirmed that the planet Earth and its ecosystems are our common home and that " Mother Earth" is an expression used in many countries and regions that acknowledges the rights of nature and recognizes that the most vulnerable, including indigenous populations, must be empowered.

66. The 2030 Agenda has a significant forerunner in our region. Popol Vuh, the holy book of the Mayas, says: "Let everyone arise, let everyone be called, let no one be left behind; not one, not two, but all as one".

XII. Conclusions and recommendations of the first meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

67. The conclusions and recommendations of the first meeting of the Forum were discussed and agreed upon in a contact group, which met during the three days of the meeting. The agreed language was submitted to the plenary, where it was adopted unanimously. The conclusions and recommendations of the Forum will be presented by Mexico, as Chair of the Forum, to the high-level political forum of the United Nations at its meeting on 10-19 July 2017.

Annex

[Original: English]

Intergovermentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the first meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

We, the Ministers and high representatives gathered at the first meeting of the Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development convened under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Mexico City,

1. *Reaffirm* the commitment of our countries and of our region with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, stressing that it is people-centred, universal and transformative, that its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — and that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,

2. *Reaffirm also* the commitment to leave no one behind and acknowledge that empowering those who are vulnerable is crucial to sustainable development,

3. *Recall* that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides a global framework for financing sustainable development, is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, recognize the synergies of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito, Ecuador, the SAMOA Pathway and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recommend further strengthening of multilateral cooperation at the regional and global levels for their effective implementation, and acknowledge the importance of the regional conferences and processes for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

4. *Highlight* that with the first meeting of this new forum, the Latin American and Caribbean Countries have advanced in implementing the 2030 Agenda by engaging in a systematic process of follow-up and review at the regional level, building on existing mechanisms, which provides useful opportunities for regional cooperation and peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on agreed targets and identified challenges, as well as for convening regional contributions to the High-level Political Forum and the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, and in this regard recommend further engagement in coming years,

5. *Commend* the three countries of the region that presented voluntary national reviews at the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC in 2016, and the eleven countries preparing for doing the same in 2017, and highlight the commitment and leadership shown by these fourteen countries in their early steps to implement the 2030 Agenda, including by integrating it into their national development and sustainable development strategies,[5] recommend further volunteering, and look forward to appropriate allocation of time and feedback at the

[5] In 2016: Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela. In 2017: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

ministerial segment of the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC,

6. *Recognize* the importance to continue to address the diverse needs and challenges faced by countries in special situations, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as the specific challenges facing middle-income countries and countries in situation of conflict and post conflict,

7. *Reiterate* the call on the United Nations system, in consultation with the international financial institutions, to develop transparent measurements of progress on sustainable development that go beyond per capita income and recognize poverty in all of its forms and dimensions, as well as the social, economic and environmental dimensions of domestic output and structural gaps at all levels, for effectively eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities within and among countries, and further recommend to continue building institutional capacities for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including for data collection and monitoring,

8. *Recommend* ECLAC, through the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, to advance the production of indicators that are relevant to the region in the framework proposed by the Sustainable Development Goals and strengthen the particular national statistical capacities,

9. *Underscore* that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and that the protection and full realization of their human rights are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, and in this regard recommend further streamlining a gender approach into national sustainable development policies and strategies,

10. *Emphasize* the importance for countries of the region of official development assistance and climate financing, which is additional to the latter, particularly, to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and bridge its structural gaps, as well as the importance of South-South cooperation and the potential for it between Latin American and Caribbean countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda,

11. *Recall* that South-South cooperation is an important element of international cooperation for development as a complement, not a substitute, to North-South cooperation, and reaffirm the importance of fully complying with international commitments made in this regard, including the mobilization of financial and non-financial resources and the promotion of the development, transfer, dissemination of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favorable terms, and further recommend to increase regional cooperation, inter alia, on the development of endogenous science and technology,

12. *Recognize* the potential impacts of exponential technological change and automation in our countries and in this regard, recommends the Secretariat of ECLAC to issue a concept note on the matters, with concrete recommendations for the consideration of the Latin American and Caribbean countries at the Ministerial Conference on Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Santiago de Chile in August 8 and 9, with a view to initiate a discussion on the matters, including by establishing a task group to further elaborate regional recommendations for ongoing UN processes related to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the HLPF, ECOSOC and the General Assembly, as appropriate,

13. *Stress* the importance and transformative potential of entrepreneurship and the private sector, and incentivizing changes in financing as well as consumption and production patterns to support sustainable development, and recommend to develop policies and, where appropriate, strengthening regulatory frameworks to better align private sector incentives with public goals, including incentivizing the private sector to adopt sustainable practices and foster long-term quality investment,

14. *Recommend* redoubling efforts to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, including by combating tax evasion and corruption through strengthened national regulation and increased international cooperation and reducing opportunities for tax avoidance to make sure that all companies, including multinationals, pay taxes to the Governments of countries where economic activity occurs and value is created, and further recall that every State has, and shall freely exercise, full permanent sovereignty over all its wealth, natural resources and economic activity,

15. *Acknowledge* the primary responsibility of Governments in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which takes into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respects national policies and priorities, welcome the numerous contributions and the support provided by the United Nations System and the international organizations and programs with a presence in the region, and reiterate the need to ensure that their activities are carried out in a coherent and coordinated manner and in line with national policies and priorities,

16. *Recall* the participatory and inclusive character of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which encourages the participation of all relevant stakeholders, and in this regard recommend to ensure, as appropriate, an effective and significant participation of civil society organizations, academia and private sector at the upcoming meetings of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, welcome their contributions to its first meeting, and recommend their continuous engagement in implementing the 2030 Agenda in the region,

17. *Reaffirm* that States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries, and

18. *Take note* with appreciation of ECLAC annual report on regional progress and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its annex on financing, request the Secretariat to prepare an updated version, and recommend the Presidency of the 36th Session of ECLAC to submit it, along with the present conclusions and recommendations and a Summary of the Chair, as regional contributions to the upcoming High-Level Political Forum and ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, as well as to the United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism, for their due consideration,

19. *Express* our appreciation to ECLAC for the support provided to the region in its efforts to implement 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and urge the Commission to continue to support regional initiatives to leave no one behind,

20. *Value* the format and organization of the first forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, as well as the modalities for the participation of multiple actors, and invite the Chair of the Thirty-sixth session of ECLAC, with the support of the Secretariat, to maintain a constant dialogue with all the member countries of the Forum and the relevant actors to

follow-up the activities that result from the regional follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and

21. *Express* our deepest appreciation to the Government of Mexico for organizing and hosting the first meeting of the Forum of the Latin American and Caribbean Countries.